AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-10. (Cancelled)

11. (New) A method for operating an internal combustion engine, comprising:

setting a torque output of the internal combustion engine via a power actuator as a function of a signal of a driver's command sender;

forming a value for a maximum admissible torque of the internal combustion engine;

forming a dimension figure for an actual torque of the internal combustion engine and comparing the dimension figure to the value for the maximum admissible torque;

triggering an error response if the actual torque exceeds the value for the maximum admissible torque; and

superimposing an intervention of a fault regulator on an activating signal of the power actuator,

wherein the value for the maximum admissible torque is formed from a linking of a first approximation value to an estimated value for a torque contribution of the intervention of the fault regulator, the first approximation value being formed as a function of the signal of the driver's command sender.

12. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein the fault regulator has a D2T2 component having operating point-dependent parameters.

13. (New) The method according to claim 12, wherein, during the formation of the value for the maximum admissible torque, the estimated value for the torque contribution of the intervention of the fault regulator includes an emulating of the D2T2 component using fixed parameters.

14. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein, during the formation of the value for the maximum admissible torque, an actual controlled variable output by the power actuator is taken into consideration.

15. (New) The method according to claim 14, wherein the actual controlled variable output by the power actuator is taken into consideration by an extremal value selection in comparison to an emulated controlled variable.

16. (New) The method according to claim 15, further comprising comparing a result of the extremal value selection to a fixed value by an extremal value selection.

17. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein the estimated value for the torque contribution of the intervention of the fault regulator is formed by access to a characteristics curve addressed using a second derivative of a rotary speed of the internal combustion engine with respect to time.

18. (New) The method according to claim 11, further comprising triggering an error response without waiting time during a transition into an overrun condition of the internal combustion engine.

19. (New) A control unit for controlling an internal combustion engine, comprising:

means for setting a torque output of the internal combustion engine via a power actuator as a function of a signal of a driver's command sender;

means for forming a value for a maximum admissible torque of the internal combustion engine;

means for forming a dimension figure for an actual torque of the internal combustion engine and comparing the dimension figure to the value for the maximum admissible torque;

means for triggering an error response if the actual torque exceeds the value for the maximum admissible torque; and

means for superimposing an intervention of a fault regulator on an activating signal of the power actuator,

wherein the value for the maximum admissible torque is formed from a linking of a first approximation value to an estimated value for a torque contribution of the intervention of the fault regulator, the first approximation value being formed as a function of the signal of the driver's command sender.

20. (New) The control unit according to claim 19, wherein the power actuator includes at least one of the following components: a system of fuel injectors, a throttle actuator in connection with a throttle valve, a variable intake valve control, and an ignition system.